

Community Economic Development Checklist

The purpose of a community checklist is to help you analyze your community's strengths and weaknesses *before* you develop a plan to improve economic development opportunities in your community. It is a list of activities and conditions over which you *may or may not* have some level of control. When completed, your answers will be a reflection of your community's *readiness* to retain existing businesses, to attract new businesses and residents, and to grow small businesses within your community.

The community checklist tool is intended for a group assessment of a community. A group of individuals (at least four) from your community should each complete the form by answering "yes", "no" or "don't know" for each item. After completion, the group should discuss how each question was answered. To evaluate and improve your community's readiness, identify strengths ("yes" answers) and weaknesses ("no" and "don't know" answers). Contact your [economic development manager](#) or [Mary Cole-Laub](#) with questions.

		Yes	No	Don't Know
I.	ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
1.	Our city council/village board has a pro-business attitude - actively supporting economic development activities through funding, policies and programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Key local business leaders are actively involved in:			
	a. the governmental process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. economic development efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Our community has a local economic development corporation, commission or committee responsible for economic development activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	The organization that is <u>most</u> responsible for economic development in our community is made up of <u>both</u> public and private sector members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Our community is a member of a regional organization actively engaged in economic development efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Our community has (or has access to) a full-time economic development professional.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Our community leaders work together with other economic development related professionals or organizations (such as regional planning commissions, state agencies, utilities, technical colleges and universities).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Members of our community have access to a community-based leadership training program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II.	STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
9.	The community has a comprehensive land use plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Yes	No	Don't Know
10.	Our community has a zoning ordinance that designates an adequate supply of residential, commercial and industrial-zoned land for future development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Our community has a current written economic development plan that was prepared by an economic development committee and formally adopted by local government.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Our economic development plan is part of a larger area economic development plan (multi-community, county or regional).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	The community has identified the types of businesses that fit the needs and are desired by the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	The community has an active program to encourage and support existing businesses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	We have a current marketing plan that targets businesses that are most likely to locate in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A. EXISTING BUSINESS RETENTION				
16.	A formal business retention and expansion study has been completed within the last three years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	The chamber of commerce or the economic development organization makes regular visits to businesses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	An annual business recognition event is held in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	The community has an active downtown program to support downtown development and revitalization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	Local government is responsive to the problems of existing businesses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. NEW BUSINESS FORMATION				
21.	Our community has an active business development program to assist new businesses with their start-up issues (i.e. business plan preparation, financing, recruitment of people, management, accounting, production and marketing).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	Our community has a systematic program to check on the progress of new businesses to see if they need help before they get into serious trouble.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. ATTRACTING NEW BUSINESSES		Yes	No	Don't Know
23.	We have a marketing program targeted toward industries that have been researched to determine the likelihood of locating in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	Our community actively recruits targeted industries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.	We have an organized, trained business attraction team comprised of people from both the private and public sectors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.	The existing businesses in our community are helpful in recruiting new firms to the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. TOURISM				
27.	The community has completed a tourism assets and marketing analysis within the past three years and reported the results to local businesses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.	The community has an active tourism promotion program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.	The community has an active chamber of commerce or visitor and convention bureau.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.	We have a regular calendar of promotion activities (i.e. monthly trade days, main street programs, arts and crafts, festivals).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
III. INFORMATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
31.	Our community has completed a "Community Profile" (fact sheet) that includes basic information about the community (i.e. major employers, education, health care, population, services).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.	We have a "promotional" brochure to use with tourism, relocation packets and recruitment of new businesses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.	All information contained in the community profile and in promotional materials is available and up-to-date on the Internet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.	The community maintains a current database of available commercial and industrial buildings and sites.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IV. LABOR FORCE				
35.	Our community has access to current (less than 3 years old) labor force information on the following:			
	a. wages and benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Yes	No	Don't Know
	b. labor supply by occupational categories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. productivity of the workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	d. training opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	e. employment data (employment, unemployment, underemployment and turnover rates)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.	The relationship between labor and management in our local businesses/organizations is positive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.	The wages in our community are at a high enough level to help retain our existing work force and attract new labor to the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38.	Training opportunities exist within the region to meet existing and prospective employer training needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39.	Our community has resources to help businesses hire and train a diverse work force.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40.	New or expanding employers would be able to find adequate numbers of qualified employees in our labor area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V.	INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY			
41.	Our community has an infrastructure capital improvements plan for the next five years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42.	At least 40 acres of industrial-zoned land is owned or optioned by the community for an industrial park, or is being developed by a private developer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	a. A copy of site restrictions and covenants is readily available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. There are adequate water (10" or greater) and sewer lines (12" or greater) to the property line.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. An environmental assessment has been completed for the industrial park property.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	d. Soil test borings have been made on the industrial site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43.	We have at least one vacant industrial building to attract the interest of potential new businesses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44.	There is a business incubator in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45.	Our community has a group of local investors who could assist in financing a speculative or build-to-suit building.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46.	The highways serving our community are adequate for most manufacturing and distribution operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Yes	No	Don't Know
47.	We have adequate common carrier trucking services for most manufacturing and distribution operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48.	Active rail lines serve some of our industrial sites.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49.	Our community is within a one-hour drive of an airport with scheduled commercial air service by at least one of the major airlines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50.	We have enough excess water capacity (gpd and bod) to serve the requirements of most new manufacturing operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51.	We have enough sewage treatment capacity to serve the requirements of most new manufacturing operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
52.	The community has access to or control of an environmentally sound waste disposal site for at least 5 years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53.	Our electric and natural gas rates are competitive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54.	Our community has access to adequate future supplies of electric and natural gas to satisfy expansion and attraction activities for the next 5 years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55.	A broadband high speed fiber optic cable system serves our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.	We have total digital switching capability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VI.	FINANCIAL RESOURCES			
57.	Adequate financing can be found in our community for new business start-ups and business expansions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
58.	Our economic development organization helps businesses acquire financing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
59.	Local government is aware of, and has used, municipal financing vehicles to assist economic development efforts such as Tax Incremental Financing (TIF), Business Improvement Districts (BID) and Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
60.	Our community has submitted proposals for state and/or federal funding for development programs, housing, and/or infrastructure development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Yes	No	Don't Know
61.	Local banks support community economic development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VII. QUALITY OF LIFE				
62.	The people in the community are generally proud of the quality of life here.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
63.	Property in our community is generally well maintained.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
64.	Our central business district and shopping areas are attractive, well-landscaped, free of trash, painted and well cared for.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
65.	Our community has shared ride and/or taxi service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
66.	We have a public transportation system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
67.	Our community has a good variety of available housing (different prices, styles and locations).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
68.	We have an adequate supply of moderately priced housing in our community affordable to entry-level workers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
69.	We have an adequate supply of housing suitable for seniors and/or special needs populations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
70.	The community banks support housing initiatives through home financing and/or first buyer programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
71.	Our K-12 schools compare favorably with top-quality schools elsewhere in the state.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
72.	Highly educated executives and managers considering moving to the area will recognize and value our schools as an excellent educational system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
73.	Our community has a technical college within a 30-minute drive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
74.	Our vocational programs are aligned with the needs of local employers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
75.	Our community has a two or four-year college or university within a 30-minute drive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
76.	We have a research university within a one-hour drive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
77.	Our local educational institutions are graduating students with the skills and knowledge that meet the needs of existing employers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Yes	No	Don't Know
78.	Our local educational institutions are graduating students with the skills and knowledge required by employers using high technology applications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
79.	We have a hospital or affiliated clinic in our community that provides quality specialized care including the latest diagnostic and treatment equipment available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
80.	Our hospital or affiliated clinic offers 24-hour emergency service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
81.	Our community has a sufficient number of child care facilities available for parents who work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
82.	Most of our childcare programs are well managed and highly rated by parents who use them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
83.	Our community has adequate public parks for citizen and tourist recreational needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
84.	Our community's recreational facilities and programs compare favorably with state and national standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
85.	Our community offers a variety of cultural programs and activities for different ages and tastes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
86.	We have a variety of active service organizations in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
87.	Crime rates are low in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>